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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS

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St. Margaret's Westminster,

On Monday, January 31, 1725.

BEING THE

ANNIVERSARY-FAST

For the MARTYRDOM of

King *C H A R L E S*

By *FRANCIS LOCKIER*, D. D. Dean of *Peterborough*
and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. TONSON at *Shakespear's Head* in the Strand
J. WATTS at the Printing Office in *Wild-Court* near *Lincoln's*
Inn Fields. MDCCXXVI.

Martis 1 die Februarij, 1725.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Dr. Lockier, Dean of Peterborough, for the Sermon by him Preached before this House Yesterday, at St. Margaret's Westminster, and that he be desired to Print the same; and that Sir Robert Sutton, the Lord Finch, and Mr. John Chetwynd do acquaint him therewith.

PAUL JODRELL,

Cl' Com' Dom'.



S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS.

Lam. of Jer. V. 7.

*Our Fathers have sinned, and are not, and we
have born their Iniquities.*

AS some have endeavour'd to discard God's immediate and continued *Concourse* with respect to the *Material World*, by supposing it at first *made*, and *set a going*, and ever since going of it self by the meer Laws of Motion that were originally impress'd on it; so likewise with regard to the *Moral World*, it has been pretended, that there needs nothing else to guide and govern it, but the *eternal Reasons and Differences of Things*, and that Providence has little more to do with the Government of Societies here below, than to look on, and let them shift for themselves.

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But as the *Material* World would fall into a lumpish Heap of dead and unactive Matter, so the *Moral* World would run riot into Confusion, and every evil Work, without a continued *Concourse* of Providence.

And Thanks be to God we are not left to the wide World, or the *System of Things*, but *the Lord is King*, the *Earth may be glad thereof*: 'Tis a general Happiness, that in the midst of our Troubles and Adversities, we can have a recourse to a *Throne that is establish'd in Justice and Judgment*; to *One that is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*.

'Tis to Him that the Prophet *Jeremiah* in the Text addresses his Complaints of the Ruin of his Country, and the Captivity of his Countrymen; and in laying open their Miseries and Sufferings, he makes this a great Aggravation of them.

Our Fathers have sinned, &c.

In speaking to which Words this Method will be observ'd.

First, To enquire what Account the Scripture gives us of this Dispensation of Providence, of the Fathers sinning, and their Posterity bearing their Iniquities.

Secondly, To shew the Reasonableness and Justice of the Scripture-Account of it.

Thirdly, To draw some Inferences suitable to the Occasion of our present Meeting.

First. Then the Scripture gives these two seemingly different Accounts of this Dispensation.

In

In the Mosaical^a Law, God threatens to visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children: He tells the People,^b that if they will not be reform'd, *They that are left of you shall pine away in their Iniquities, in your Enemies Lands; and also in the Iniquities of their Fathers shall they pine away.* And in the Book of Numbers, ^c *Your Children shall wander in the Wilderness forty Years, and bear your Whoredoms.* Seventy thousand Men died to expiate David's Folly and Obstinacy^d; and the People of Judah were punish'd in good Josiah's Time^e for the Sins of Manasseh. On the other hand, we find God establishing it for a Law, that the Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, nor the Children for the Fathers: That every Man shall be put to death for his own Sin^f. The Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel declare to the People, in God's Name, and the latter with an Oath, *As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this Proverb in Israel. The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge: The Soul that sinneth, it shall die: The Son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the iniquity of the Son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him*^g. All those who have considered this Matter have been aware of these two seemingly repugnant Accounts of this Dispensation of Providence, and have try'd several ways to reconcile them.

St Austin^h would have God's threatning to visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to relate to

^a Exod. xx. ^b Levit. xxvi. 39. ^c Num. xiv. 33. ^d 2 Sam. xxi. 15.
^e 2 Kings xxiii. 26. ^f Deut. xxiv. 16. ^g Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, & 20.
^h lib. 6. Cont. Julianum. cap. 12, 13.

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those who are *born of Adam*, and not regenerated or *born again*; and so, for *Adam's Sin*, are liable to eternal Damnation: and says, that when God assures them by *Ezekiel*, that the *Sons should not bear the Iniquities of their Fathers*, it is to be understood of those *Sons of Adam* that are regenerated, to whom this *Original Sin* is remitted, and who are freed from this Punishment. But this is not only a forced Interpretation, but increases Difficulties instead of solving them.

Others restrain this *visiting of the Sins of the Fathers on the Children*, to those Children only that follow their Fathers Steps, and are guilty of their Crimes: And understand what is said by the Prophets *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, that the *Sons shall not be punished for the Sins of their Fathers*, with this Condition, If the Children are not guilty of the like Sins. And this Solution, if it would hold, would make the Matter very easy.

Now 'tis thought that the Words of the Law favour this Sense, wherein God says that he will *visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him*, of those Children that set him at Defiance by their Idolatry. And this Sense is likewise countenanc'd by a Paraphrase of great Antiquity.

But this not only disagrees with the Original; but, if we consider the Terms of the Law, we shall find, that those who there *hate God*, are plainly oppos'd to those that *love him and keep his Commandments*; which last is evidently meant of the Parents, and not of the Children. Had it been meant of the Children that hate him as
their

their Fathers did, it would not have been said unto the third and fourth, but throughout *all* Generations.

Again, it would have been a strange way to prevent the Idolatries of the present Generation, (who, to be sure, were the first Persons concern'd in the Law) to threaten them with the Punishment of their Children unto the third and fourth Generation, if their Children committed Idolatry as well as they; and it would have been but a cold Encouragement to their Obedience, to assure them, that if the succeeding Generations of their Children were as good as their Parents, they should be rewarded.

There are others who allow, indeed, that no Man can be punish'd beyond his own Demerits; but then they say, that the wicked Children of wicked Parents shall be *sooner, more certainly, or more severely* punish'd, than other wicked Men are; and so the Iniquities of their Fathers are the Cause of God's proceeding with them in so extraordinary a manner.

But this will not help us out of the Difficulty; for if a Man is not punish'd *farther* than his own Demerits, he is not punish'd for his Father's Sins, but his own; and to pretend, that God would not have punish'd him quite *so much, or so soon*, i. e. would have given him more time to repent in, or dealt more favourably with him, if his Father had not sinned, is to attribute to God a kind of Humour, or Peevishness, as if he were harsh or hasty with *one*, because *another* had vex'd him; which is a way of Proceeding altogether unworthy of God: For this would make him with-
hold

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hold his Mercy and Goodness from a Man, or hasten and increase his Punishment upon no just Grounds, for a thing which a Man could not help, and was no way necessary to: And by how much more, or sooner, God punishes a Man for what he never consented to, nor ever had a hand in, just so far he punishes him for Nothing.

Besides, if this way of Reasoning could account for God's visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, it does by no means reconcile it with God's disclaiming this way of Proceeding by the Prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

There is a fourth Sort, which is of those that cut the Knot, by supposing God to act in these Dispensations as absolute Master, who has a Right to take back all, or any Part of what he has given us; either utterly to destroy our Being, or deprive us of so many Comforts of Life, and inflict on us so many Calamities, as shall leave us in a Condition only preferable to Non-Existence; because all that we have to render our Condition better than the not being at all, is the free Product of the Divine Power and Beneficence.

'Tis, say they, a certain Truth, that every superior Authority has Power to revoke all its Grants, unless it has abridg'd it self of the Exercise of that Power, by Compact or Promise; otherwise, the Donor has the same Right to withdraw, which he had to give them; and therefore God, who has given us our Beings, has full Power to destroy them.

That

That tho' with Man 'tis the highest Crime to take away the Life of an innocent Person, yet God's Relation to the Creatures being infinitely different from the Relation they bear to each other, God may have a Right to do that which no Creature can do without the most exorbitant Injustice; for God can cancel or reverse the Right a Man has in himself, whenever he pleases, only by taking back what he has given.

Now (as they urge) this Dominion that God has over an innocent Man's Life, and all its appendant Priviledges, may be exercis'd on Occasion of another Man's Sin: For what God has a Power to do absolutely, he can certainly do occasionally; and God may visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, since he might have done the same things to them, though both they and their Parents had been faultless: In short, God, by Vertue of his absolute Power, may visit, or not visit, according to his good Will and Pleasure, without any Shadow of Injustice.

And, without doubt, it must be granted that God has a supream Dominion over all his Creatures; but then we are assur'd that his Throne is establish'd in Justice and Judgment. 'Tis true, we had no Right to our Beings; but after God has given them to us, it is sure a Hardship to have them cut off, or to be depriv'd of the Comforts of them, for no other Reason, at least with respect to us, than because he had given them to us: This seems not consistent with God's Wisdom, Goodness, or Justice.

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Had he not given us a Being, we then could have had nothing to complain of; but since we have received our Beings, and enjoy'd them, to have them embitter'd or destroy'd by an arbitrary Act of Power, can't well be reconcil'd with the natural Notions we have of God: And to have this done because our *Fathers* sinned, and not for any Fault of *ours*, is such a Caprice of Power as can never be charged upon him, who is *righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.*

Tho' no Injury can be done to that of which we are Masters, as far as we are *absolute Masters*; yet it may happen that a Person that is *another's*, may in some respect be his *own* too, and in *that respect* has a Claim of Right, and is capable of being injur'd: And this is the Case of all that are endued with *Reason and Choice*, even with Regard to God himself, unless by their own Sins they have forfeited this Right and Privilege. We hold these Privileges indeed from God's *pure Gift*; but after we have receiv'd them, we can't be *justly* depriv'd of them without *our Fault*. For the Relation between Sin, and a Desert of Punishment, is no Result of God's *arbitrary Will*, but founded on the *Nature of Things*; and as it is *just* to punish Offenders, so it would be *unjust* to punish an innocent Person, without respect to Sins which he has some way or other *made his own*. And tho' none can put a Restraint upon God, yet he is so far restrain'd in his Dealings with his Creatures, by the *moral Rectitude* of his Nature, as that he will never act against the Principles of Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice. God is the *great King of all the Earth*, but he is a *good King* too; and

and we are his *Subjects* as well as his *Creatures*: so that could we pay him a *perfect* Obedience, we should have a *Claim of Right* to be well us'd, and God's Justice and Mercy could not permit him to exert his Power in depriving us of the *Comforts* we enjoy, but upon our *Demerits*.

God indeed may, and often does, cut short the Lives of good Men, or bereave them of the *Comforts of Life*, and the Pious and Impious may be equally involv'd in a *publick Calamity*: But this is to answer some great and good End of Providence, which may not so well admit of making *Distinctions* here below; and then the good Man will be *at last* a Gainer, and have all his Losses made up to him an hundred-fold. Now there can be no doubt but God may take his own *Time*, and his own *Way*, to do Good to those that keep his *Commandments*; and the *Calamities* and *Accidents* that befall them in this Life, are so far from being a Punishment, that we are assur'd, and it must be so in the Reason of the Thing, that they *all work together for the good of those that love God*.

To pretend that Justice may be quite another thing with God than we take it to be, and far *different* from the *Notions* and *Apprehensions* which our *weak Understandings* and *corrupt Reasons* may entertain of it, is the same thing as to say, that all wise Men should give over thinking or speaking of it: For if we can have no *Notions* of God's Attributes, or can't be *sure* that our *Notions* do in any wise represent them, then we believe we know not why, and *worship we know not what*.

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But besides, it is upon this very Subject that God, by his Prophet *Ezekiel*, does, as it were, refer himself to the Reasons and Notions of the *Jews*. *Are not my Ways equal? saith the Lord.* Now it would have been very strange for God to have *appeal'd* to those who (if Men can have no true Notions and Apprehensions of the Divine Attributes) could not possibly have understood any thing of the Matter.

These Solutions therefore not proving satisfactory, let us see whether a plain and easy Account (which, perhaps for that very Reason, Learned Men may have overlook'd or slighted) will not help to extricate us out of these Difficulties.

We may consider then the Matter in this Light; That when God threatens to *visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children*, and to punish *succeeding* Generations for the Crimes of the *foregoing*, God declares that he will deal thus with *Bodies Politick*, or *Communities of People*: And when God assures the *Jews* by the Prophets, that *the Son shall not bear the Iniquities of his Father, nor the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son*, but that *the Righteousness of the Righteous should be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked upon him*, it is meant of Men consider'd as *particular* Persons, whom God never punishes but for their own Sins.

And if those Places of Scripture wherein we have these different Accounts are well considered, it will be found that the Punishment of the Children for their Fathers Sins, when a real and proper Punishment for Sins wherein the Children could have no hand, when a *divine* Chastisement,

Chastisement, and not a *political* Sanction, relates wholly to *National* Crimes, publick Idolatries, Breaches of Faith, Transgressions of King or People, Governours or Governed, which two Parts constitute a Society, and are often punish'd for each others Faults: which is no more absurd and unreasonable in the *Body Politick*, than that one Member should suffer for another in the *Body Natural*.

On the other hand, when we look over the Account which the Prophets give us, of God's disclaiming the punishing the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, it will appear plainly that this Method of Proceeding relates wholly to *particular* Men, and not to *Communities*. For when God, by the Prophet, tells the *Jews* that they should not have Occasion to use this Proverb, *The Fathers have eaten sowre Grapes, and the Children's Teeth are set on Edge*, 'tis evident it must be meant of *particular Persons*, it being very plain that the *Jews*, as a *Body* and *Community*, had Occasion to use this Proverb both **before* and †*after*; but as *particular Men* they never had nor could have Occasion to use it.

Having thus, 'tis hop'd, fairly stated the Scripture Account of this Dispensation, and clear'd it from its main Difficulties, the next Head is to shew

Secondly, The Justice and Reasonableness of the Account the Scripture gives of it.

Nothing can be more just than that every Man should bear his *own* Iniquity; for no Man can be punish'd for

* 2 Kings, xxiii. 26. † Mat. xxiii. 36.

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the Transgression of another, unless he consents to it, and so makes it his own; or voluntarily agrees to take it upon himself, and stands good for it, to answer the Ends of Government in the Punishment, as our Saviour did when he bore the Iniquities of us all; or as in the Case of Hostages; but then it was all along suppos'd, that it was not the Hostage properly, but the Society which broke Faith and Treaty, that was punished.

For Punishment supposes a Transgression of the Law, and a free Agent who had Power not to have transgress'd it: Now a Man could have no Power to hinder a Crime that was committed before he was born, and therefore can't justly be punish'd for it.

Man indeed may be consider'd as a particular Person, or as a Member of Society, and in both Respects may be said to be punish'd: As a particular Man, no Man can be punish'd but for Personal Guilt; but as a Member of Society he must lie under the Inconveniencies that Society is liable unto; as he shares in its Protection, so he does in its Difficulties and Dangers; and as he is subject to the National Debts, which the Community has contracted, so he is to the Judgments that hang over it, tho' that Community was under both those Debts and Judgments before he was born: but the Man, as a particular Person, is not properly punish'd by one more than by the other.

He may look out for a Society (if such an one is to be found) that is liable to none of these Inconveniencies; but whilst he continues in a Society that is liable to them, he is upon the same Bottom with his Fellow-Members, and has no just Reason of Complaint for bearing his Share in the

the Debts or the Punishments, which the former Generations had contracted.

Now it is highly reasonable and necessary, for the present *Vindication* of the Honour and Majesty of the Divine Government, that such *Publick Bodies* and *Communities* as join hand in hand to do wickedly, and (as it were) *establish Iniquity by Law*, should be punish'd: For there is (as has been observ'd) a Relation founded upon the *Nature of Things* between *Sin* and *Punishment*; and in what Capacity soever Mankind may *Act*, in that they may *Sin*: Now Men may *Act* as a *Body* or *Society*, and may *Sin* as such, and consequently may be punish'd as such: But no Nation or Body can be punish'd as a *Nation* or *Body*, but in this World; and if they are not punish'd and rewarded here, it is hard to say what God's Providence has to do with them.

And as it is plain in Scripture, that when the Iniquity of a Nation is full, that Nation God will judge ^a as a Nation: So it has been a stated Maxim of all Communities which have own'd a Providence, that they were often chastiz'd as a *Nation* and *Community*: And, in fact, the Experience of all Ages has confirm'd, that a sinful Nation, sooner or later, receives a *Judgment* worthy of God. I say sooner or later, for God often bears with a sinful Nation, and suffers not his *whole Anger* to arise immediately and consume them. Thus we find, that God, when he passes before *Moses*,^b amongst his Titles of *Gracious*, *Merciful*, *Long-suffering*, and *Abundant in Goodness*, he proclaims his *visiting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the*

^a Gen. xv. 14, 16.

^b Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

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Children, and upon the Childrens Children, unto the third and fourth Generation. For 'tis a great Instance of God's Forbearance, that he *strives* with a sinful Society so long; and gives them Time and Space for Repentance, for deprecating and averting his Wrath. For a Society is, as *Plutarch* observes on this Subject, *to 'ev*, one and the same continued Body, and it is as much an Effect of *Mercy* to spare it so many Generations, as it is to spare a Man so many Years; and there is no more Injustice in punishing a Nation at last, than there is in an Old Man's suffering for the Sins of his Youth, tho' perhaps he is not quite so guilty at the Time of his Sufferings, as he had been before.

And this may likewise happen in *National* Punishments: God's Time for Punishment may fall upon a Society when in all Appearance that Society is not so wicked as it was in former Generations; which was the Case of the People of *Judah*, who in good *Josiah's* Reign felt the Punishment of Sins that had been committed when *Manasseh* was King: For God may forbear to punish a sinful Society, and strike when he finds it a fit Time to vindicate his Honour to the World; and he sure is the best, nay the only Judge, when 'tis a proper Time.

When God brings War, Plague, or Famine, upon a Nation, and sweeps away good and bad, neither the best nor the worst are punish'd as particular Sinners; but they suffer as Part of the Nation, which is chastiz'd by the Loss of its People.

Sometimes indeed private Men may be cut off in an extraordinary Manner, by a particular Interposition of Providence, for the good of Society, to take them out of the way; when their mischievous Designs, or desperate Attempts, run counter to the Designs of Providence; but this is not properly a *Punishment* for their particular Sins: for they are to be judg'd for them in another Place, and punish'd in another and far worse Manner.

Again, God in the Prophetical Phrase, may take away from a sinful Nation the *mighty Man, and the Man of War, the Judge and the Prophet, the Prudent and the Ancient*: But this is not a Punishment to them, but to the Nation.

But with regard to the *general Course* of Providence as to particular Persons in this World, though they suffer for their Vices, by the Distempers and Diseases they bring upon their Bodies, and the Fears and Disquiets they bring upon their Minds, which are the natural *Consequences* of Things, yet the Evils they suffer can't truly and properly be call'd *Judgments* or *Punishments*, any more than a Man's breaking his Neck by leaping down a Precipice, can be properly call'd God's Judgment upon him. When a Society is punish'd, *all* are punish'd; and the Sons of those Fathers who resisted the Evils of the former Generations, and died in opposing them, suffer the same as the Sons of the guilty Parents, nay often more: So that 'tis plain, that this visiting the Sins of one Generation on another, is in relation only to *Societies*, and does not extend to particular Persons: and for a Man, consider'd as a particular Person, to repent of any Sins but his own, is absurd; and to deprecate God's Wrath and Vengeance on a Man's self

for a Crime that he had no hand in, (to deprecate God's Vengeance, I say, in any other Sense, but as he may be a Member of a Society that lies under that Vengeance) is an *affront* to God's Justice and Goodness, is a desiring him not to be *unrighteous* and *unmerciful*.

This ('tis hop'd) may be sufficient to clear the Scriptural Account of this Dispensation, and to shew the Reasonableness and Justice of a Principle on which the Appointment of this Anniversary is establish'd.

Thirdly, Let us proceed to some Inferences suitable to this Occasion.

First, With Respect to *particular* Persons, Men may be assur'd that God's Anger is appeas'd towards them, and that they are no longer under his Displeasure, when they have repented of their Sins, and lead a new Life: And with regard to *Communities*, tho' we have not such *absolute Assurances* whether God's Hand is not still stretch'd out against them, yet *then*, and *then only* can we have *reasonable Hopes* that a Nation is return'd to favour, when the Crimes, which according to all Appearances drew on them the judgments they have deprecated, are no longer visibly general.

Has a People humbled themselves before God for former Transgressions? It will then only be fit to put off their *Sackcloth*, and gird themselves with *Gladness*, when there is a general forsaking of those Sins.

If the former Crimes and Immoralities for which they have humbled themselves are yet flagrant; if the same Murmurs and Repinings, Perjuries and Rebellions, still grow

grow and spread; a Nation should be so far from giving over its Humiliation, that the Inhabitants should make themselves yet *more vile* before God, and have just Reason to expect *greater Judgments*.

Secondly, Let not Men think they sufficiently testify their Abhorrence of their Fathers Sins, and as it were in some measure *atone* for them, by running riot against the present Times; for the Experience of all Ages has shewn, that a *furious declaiming* against the Vices of the Times is not the way to reform them, and that fierce *Investives* against the present Men and Things, do as little Service to the World, as 'tis probable the Authors of those *Investives* design'd to do: And however pleas'd Men may be to hear these Things, very few apply them to themselves; and it fares with these *general Declamations* as it does with universal Medicines, that pretend to cure us of all Diseases, but effectually rid us of none. It would be far easier and wiser for Men to *shut the Door of their Lips*, and not *shoot out their bitter Words*, but take care that the Times should not be the worse for them; and the best Way to cure the present Diseases, is not to *call them hard Names*, and to be eloquent in descanting upon them, and exaggerating the Evils, but to study to apply such Remedies as every Man has at hand: Now 'tis in each Man's Power to endeavour to be better, and then we need not fear but the Times will mend.

Much less should Men think to appease the *Wrath of God*, which hangs over them, by exercising the *Wrath of Man*; by marking out a Set or Party which they don't like,

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like, for the *Children of Disobedience*, and then as it were offering them up to God for Sacrifices.

When the succeeding Generations of a People bear the Iniquities of their Fathers, the *whole* is concern'd, no Man has a Right to draw his Stake, or to cry out it was not he; and as nothing but a *National Frugality* can put a Stop to a *National Luxury* and Ruin, so nothing but a *National Humiliation* and Amendment can put a Stop to a *National Judgment*.

Thirdly, If *National Sins* do in the ordinary Course of Providence, and in the Nature of Things, draw down *National Judgments*, no Man can be a true *Patriot* that is not a *good Man*; that does not by his Example, Industry and Encouragement, endeavour to promote *that Righteousness which exalteth a Nation*, and (as far as in him lies) to prevent those Sins that are *the Ruin of a People*: The right Spirit of Patriotism does not consist in popular Clamours, or railing Accusations, in *distinguishing* a Man's self in *Party Fews*, or *heading a Faction*, but in virtuous Actions, in the moral Perfections of the Mind, in a due Obedience to Government and Laws, in a religious Behaviour towards God, and a just and humane Deportment towards all Mankind.

The true Temper of a Patriot is as far from a *rugged Fierceness* as a *base Servility*; will make equitable Allowances both for *publick* and *private* Miscarriages, and use its utmost Efforts to deliver Men from the *Bondage* of Sin and Corruption, as well as to rescue them from the *Slavery* of Tyranny and Oppression: and a true *Lover of Mankind*.

as much dreads the Mischiefs that are *entail'd* on Societies by Immorality and Wickedness, as those that *rush in* upon it by illegal and arbitrary Power.

In short, there is nothing that has brought more *discredit* on the Noblest of all Social Virtues, (*viz.*) *Love of our Country*, than the seeing so many that set up for it, severe and unindulgent to all but themselves; so zealous in reforming every thing but their own Lives; and under such *Impatiencies*, as shew rather an *Uneasiness* at their own *Disappointment*, than an *Exertion* of a *Publick Spirit*.

In a Word, a vicious *private* Life is the very worst Preparative for a *Publick* Station; and he that acts *wickedly* as a *Man*, has lost the best Security he can give to any Community, that he will act *honestly* as a *Patriot*.

Fourthly, How greatly have our Fathers sinn'd, the Authors and Actors of this Day's Tragedy! Who, contrary to all the Laws, to their own Remonstrances and Protestations, wherein they solemnly profess'd, that they never intended the least Hurt, Injury, or Violence, to the King's Person, Crown, or Dignity, audaciously presum'd to usurp to themselves the Title of the supream Authority of the Kingdom; against the Majority of the House of Commons, and the unanimous Votes of the Peers, and most wickedly erected an execrable Crew into what they call'd a High Court of Justice; wherein a Set of Men who had vow'd his Majesty's Destruction, and thirsted after his Blood, not only refus'd to admit his just Reasons.

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sons and Exceptions against their usurp'd Jurisdiction, but proceeded traitersonly to condemn and murder him, and sacrific'd to their Lusts, Ambition and Cruelty, their King and Country, our Religion and Laws, Liberties and Properties, and all Duties divine and human: A Fact, that as it has no Example, so it admits of no Aggravation.

Some indeed there are, who are very fond of running a Parallel between the Crimes of which we now declare our Abhorrence, and the late glorious Revolution: But if this Parallel were a true one, it would be a better Apology for the *Evil of the Day*, than the Wit and Malice of *Milton*, or the Rage and Impudence of the *Regicides*, could invent; it would confirm the Jealousies and Distrusts, Reports and Calumnies, of King *Charles's* worst Enemies, and leave the Steadiness and Loyalty of his best Friends defenceless.

I shall not enter into the Absurdity of so injurious a Parallel, but shall only say, if it did hold, it would follow that King *Charles* design'd to destroy the establish'd Religion, and introduce Popery; that he resolv'd to dispense with the Laws, that is, to over-rule them; that he was a fast Friend to our greatest Enemies, and a sworn Enemy to our best Friends; in a word, if this were a just Parallel, it would follow, that all that enter'd into King *Charles's* Measures were Traytors to their Country, and they that oppos'd them so many Patriots. Let none then, who pretend to a just Sense of the Horrour of this Day's Fact, any longer compare a Day of Gladness

ness and Triumph, to a Day of Blackness and Darkness for ever.

Fifthly. If we desire that God would not remember the Iniquities of our Forefathers, and if we would deliver our selves from a Burden which we shall never be able to bear, let us deprecate God's Judgments for the barbarous Murder that was as on this Day committed; and let us more especially avoid those leading Steps which brought our Fathers to the highest Crimes, involv'd this Nation in Blood, and ended so fatally in the Ruin of Church and State.

Not to trespass too much on your Patience, I shall instance only in two Things, which introduc'd, fomented, and kept up, the Confusion and Wickedness of those Times; and which one would have thought, should have been peculiar to them, had not our own Times convinced us of the contrary.

1. There was nothing contributed more to the Miseries which the Nation then suffered, than an industrious Care in some ambitious Spirits, to possess the People with a Dislike of the King and his Government, and by false Insinuations, horrible Surmises, and scandalous Calumnies, to render his Honour and Sincerity suspected. They not only represented him as a cruel Tyrant, but as a Favourer of Popery, or as secretly inclining to the Romish Superstition: And when they had thus drawn and misrepresented him to the undiscerning Multitude, to catch those that were zealous without Knowledge, they disguis'd their Designs with the Pretence of standing up for the true

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true Religion and Constitution, when, as the Event shew'd, they intended the Ruin of both.

These were the Reports that turned Mens Heads, and made them mad with the Idols of their own Brain; that fill'd them first with a *Dislike*, then a *Contempt*, and at length a *Hatred* for his Majesty: And when Men have once lost all Love and Respect, or Trust and Confidence in their Ruler, they lie open to the Snares of designing, crafty, and ambitious Men.

2. The other Thing I shall mention, which was a main Cause of our fatal Confusions, was an irreligious Contempt for the sacred Bond of Oaths, and the making no Account of the horrid Crime of Perjury. For what Society or Government can be kept up, where there is no Trust to be put in one another? and what Trust can be put in any Man that makes no Conscience of an Oath or Vow? What solemn Protestations were there before God, that they designed nothing but the King's Glory and Safety, whilst they were undermining his Throne and attacking his Life? Oaths were taken with an Intent to be broke, and to deceive those that trusted in them; and Perjury, instead of being stigmatiz'd as the highest Wickedness, was dignify'd by the Name of Cunning and Dexterity. And can we wonder that such Crimes as these should make a People *Vessels of Wrath* fitted for Destruction?

To conclude. We have seen what it was, that brought our Church and Constitution to Ruin, by what Crimes Men arriv'd to the Top of Wickedness: Let us now look about us, and see if there be any of this *accursed Thing*

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in the midst of our *Israel*, and let it be speedily taken away from among us.

Are there not too many that are busie in dispersing scandalous Rumours, to make Men uneasy under the present Government, and lessen their Respect and Love for their Rulers?

Is it not to be fear'd that there are many that pay too little Regard to their Oaths and Abjurations? that however strong they are bound upon them, easily break thro' them, and take them in order only to capacitate them for greater Mischiefs? But let not these Men pretend to be of any Church, much less of ours; for they must be downright Libertines and profane Scoffers, to mock at the Majesty of the great God, whom they call to be a Witness of their Perjuries.

They may indeed claim our Pity, who sit quiet under the present Administration, tho' through a misguided Conscience they can't take an Oath to it; and a Government may commiserate their Case so far, as to take other Securities for their peaceable Behaviour: But what Fence can there be against Men that neither *stick at taking* nor *breaking* an Oath? Not only such Mens *Religion is vain*, but they must forfeit all Pretence to Honour, or common Probity, even with the Men of this World, when they shew, that they have neither *Courage* enough to *refuse* an Oath, nor *Honesty* enough to *keep* it.

Let us then deprecate God's Anger, that he may not remember the Iniquities of our Fore-fathers, nor take Vengeance of our Sins: Let the Inhabitants of this Land learn Right-

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...from the Things they have suffered, and let not
us of this Generation be so desperately stupid, as not to
take Warning, till our Experience becomes our Misery,
our Instruction our Ruin: Let us listen to the Prophet's
reasonable Exclamation, *Ah sinful People! ah People laden
with Iniquity! Why will ye be stricken any more?*

F I N I S.

